

COUNTY COUNCIL – 13 February 2019
Members' Questions

1. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
<p>To: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p> <p>I understand that the Local Resilience Forum (of which the County Council is a key player) is preparing for Brexit scenarios including 'No Deal'. Can you please list in detail the preparations and decisions taken by the Local Resilience Forum to date for Gloucestershire regarding Brexit.</p>	<p>The, police-chaired, local resilience forum has been primarily considering the, over 100, technical notices from central government, and considering their implications for the county. The forum have not identified any significant implications warranting an escalation of our emergency response capability. This is being reviewed on a weekly basis.</p>
2. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
<p>Will the Leader be given a ceremonial box of Moreland matches to start the incinerator at Javelin Park?</p>	<p>I understand England's Glory matches are now made in Sweden, a country which is committed to the idea of energy from waste, so perhaps that symbolism would be appropriate. Like Sweden Gloucestershire will soon achieve the diversion of over 90% of its waste from landfill, reducing our production of harmful greenhouse gases by the equivalent of 40,000 tonnes per year.</p>
3. Questioner's name: Cllr Iain Dobie	Respondent's name: Cllr Dave Norman
<p>How much gross revenue would be generated overall for Shire Hall from the currently mooted increased GCC on-street parking charges in Cheltenham alone (permit and pay-as-you-park)?</p>	<p>We estimate approximately £250,000 -£300,000 additional gross revenue, before deducting operating costs. All on street parking income paid to the county council goes back into our parking services first. Whatever then remains is spent on highways maintenance and transport services only.</p>
4. Questioner's name: Cllr Iain Dobie	Respondent's name: Cllr Dave Norman
<p>What is the annual cost to GCC for administering/enforcing the above on-street parking in Cheltenham?</p>	<p>We do not disaggregate costs for every element of the parking service to district level. We estimate the total cost of all on street pay and display and permit services in Cheltenham to be £741,000 p.a.</p>

<p>5. Questioner's name: Cllr Iain Dobie</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Dave Norman</p>
<p>How much net annual profit would Shire Hall make from the above, should the increased future charges be approved?</p>	<p>The forecast effect of these changes is approximately £170,000-£205,000 additional net surplus for reinvesting in improving parking, highways and transport services.</p>
<p>6. Questioner's name: Cllr Iain Dobie</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Dave Norman</p>
<p>How much of that profit has been spent in the past annually on the roads/footpaths/cycleways of Cheltenham (as a gross figure and a proportion of the county as a whole) and how much of the increased profit would be spent on the town in future?</p>	<p>We spend over £40m per year on highway, spread across the entire County. Spending varies from year to year depending on factors like government grants, successful bids and developer funding as well as general fluctuations in available revenue. Some of the activity is planned capital spend whilst some is revenue funded reactive repairs like potholes which are managed by gangs that work across the county. We take a County-wide whole-life asset management approach to managing carriageways and footways and our prioritisation of spending is needs-led and not simply split out equally to each district. Because of the way maintenance activities are undertaken it is not possible to track all spending by district so providing any sort of meaningful figures would require significant officer time. What I can give reassurance on is that officers go to great effort to ensure that spending reflects the needs within each area. I am also happy to meet with any member with the relevant highways officers to go through spending in their area in detail. Indeed, this year's full carriageway resurfacing programme is available to all members on the Council's website if they want to see what schemes are being delivered in their area.</p>
<p>7. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p>
<p>To Cllr Vernon Smith:</p> <p>On the tragic accident on the A417 last July, what internal investigations have taken place into this particular incident and what were the findings into this catastrophic failure?</p>	<p>Please see the response to public question 3 on this subject.</p>

8. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>To Cllr Vernon Smith</p> <p>On the matter above, the judge ruled that, "The reality is that if everything had been in order the prospects of an accident would have been diminished." As such, what learnings have been taken away by the Highways Team such that Gloucestershire's highway network is never again the key factor in a tragic incident such as this?</p>	<p>Please see the response to public question 3 on this subject.</p>
9. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
<p>To: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p> <p>Last September, you stated that you would not waste tax payers' money on hypothetical planning around a no deal. Given that the Government has now asked all councils to prepare for a no deal Brexit, would you like to revise your previous comments and can you explain why?</p>	<p>No – indeed this clearly demonstrates that spending GCC funds on this months ago, before any technical documents were available, would not have been a good use of taxpayers' money.</p>
10. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>To: Cllr Vernon Smith</p> <p>Over a 6 month period in 2018 the residents of Chalford High Street (a narrow, single-track road) suffered enormous stress and inconvenience when the road was closed due to disruption following the installation of the Fastershire broadband programme. Efforts were made by the parish council and residents, with the contractors (Gigaclear and their sub-contractor Complete Utilities), to arrive at an agreement for clear communication with the parish council and the residents about how any future work would take place. In the last 2 weeks, the sub-contractor Complete Utilities have once again begun work on the High St, without prior warning to the parish council, or the residents, including work starting at 6.30 in the morning.</p>	<p>I appreciate the frustrations local residents can have with utility works – particularly when they are long-lasting. GCC works to coordinate street works where we can – but utility companies have a statutory right to lay and maintain apparatus.</p> <p>For major schemes such as the broadband rollout, we work with utility companies and help them find the best approach in order to complete the work, at this stage we apply conditions, such as manual control of traffic lights at peak hours to reduce congestion.</p> <p>The works promoter (utility in this case) is responsible for informing residents and businesses that works are going to take place in the area, this may be in the form of advanced warning signs or a letter drop</p>

<p>How does the council ensure Streetworks contractors maintain good relationships with residents where they are causing disruption?</p>	<p>with contact details, so that if anyone has a concern they can call the company direct. Many people will contact GCC directly if they have a question about the works, this suits us as it makes us aware of any potential problems that may occur at the works site.</p> <p>The last work mentioned in the question relates to Complete Utilities working on an urgent repair on their network as 150 customers were off supply. All utilities have a statutory right to carry out urgent/emergency work without notification in advance, where it is not practical to provide it.</p>
<p>11. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>To: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p> <p>In their covering letter* when supplying the report published on 20th December 2018, showing an approximately 30% increase in the cost of the Javelin Park contract when it was renegotiated in 2015/16, Ernst and Young state "Our work has been limited in scope and time and we stress that a more detailed review may reveal material issues that this review has not identified."</p> <p>When even the Council's own consultants are highlighting that there may be material issues of note that need to be explored in relation to the Javelin Park project, and contract renegotiations, will the leader now back the creation of an independent inquiry into this project, in line with the call set out in the open letter of 7th January?</p> <p>If he will not, will he explain which existing council processes have addressed the five points outlined in that letter?</p> <p>*https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/542390/response/130444/5/attach/2/E%20Y%20Scope%20for%20Dec%2018%20report.pdf</p>	<p>This is standard wording included in all EY reports in the United Kingdom.</p>

<p>12. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>To: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p> <p>Was the signature of a revised contract in 2016, leading to an approximately 30% increase in total project costs, carried out in line with the Public Contract Regulations 2015?</p>	<p>As Cllr Smith is very well aware, this is currently the subject of a legal action against the council, and I will have to withhold comment until its conclusion.</p>
<p>13. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>Which other local authorities in the country make use of a 'Real Average Gate Fee' to benchmark their waste disposal?</p>	<p>That is a question Cllr Smith would have to address to other authorities. Using real average gate fee means that factors like the money the council will make from electricity generation are taken into account – and therefore a more accurate illustration of the cost to the taxpayer if provided.</p>
<p>14. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>Why was the choice made to compare the RAGF calculated by Ernst and Young to WRAP data from 2016, when 2017 data was available?</p>	<p>The Contract was signed in 2016 and hence the prices shown and the comparator are for that period.</p>
<p>15. Questioner's name: Cllr Chris Coleman</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p>
<p>To: Cllr Vernon Smith</p> <p>It is approaching six years since I first raised the issue of the dangerous junction of Alstone Lane with Alstone Croft in my Division. I have had site meetings with Local Highways Officers, entered into various correspondence with them and other GCC representatives, spoken directly to the Cabinet member and even submitted an FOI request to try to get to the bottom of why no progress has been made.</p> <p>£30,000 from 'my' 2017 Highways Local funding remains allocated to the scheme which would see the dangerous junction closed to traffic in accordance with the long held wishes of local residents. The</p>	<p>I appreciate Cllr Coleman's concerns about the time this has taken. I believe officers have explained to that there is not a simple solution here. Highway officers have been working with road safety colleagues, CBC councillors, the police and local residents to try to find a suitable solution to the problems with this junction.</p> <p>I am very happy to arrange a meeting with Cllr Coleman to discuss taking this forward.</p>

<p>scheme continues to have their support as well as that of the local Borough Councillors.</p> <p>Why is the scheme still marked as being “In Design”? When will the work actually be completed? Is a near six year delay to what is a really straight forward scheme acceptable?”</p>	
<p>16. Questioner’s name: Cllr Eva Ward</p>	<p>Respondent’s name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>In March 2018 this Council agreed to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of single-use plastics (SUPs).</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member tell us about the progress made to date in this matter and provide a list of our plans and targets to achieve this aim?</p>	<p>We have already eliminated a significant amount of SUP from our catering services contracts within Shire Hall, and the external school’s catering contract. All plastic cutlery has now been replaced with either reusable material or recyclable alternatives, most plastic food containers have been replaced with recyclable alternatives and we are working to have eliminated all of these by the end of March 2019. On the rural estate we are working with our tenants and the wider farming community to reduce then eliminate the use of SUPs on our tenanted farms for things like wrapping for hay bales and storage bags for feed etc.</p> <p>We are also working closely with our major framework contractors in order to reduce the amount of SUPs in use as part of the construction process. These are industry wide issues and we are dependant on supply chain partners taking action in this respect. We continue to put pressure on them to do so.</p>
<p>17. Questioner’s name: Cllr Eva Ward</p>	<p>Respondent’s name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>In what ways has the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Partnership managed to promote the reduction of single-use plastics across the County?</p>	<p>The Joint Waste Team (JWT) has focussed on reducing single use plastic through recent promotional campaigns. Tips and advice were posted using #wastefreewednesday to social media and also to the Recycle for Gloucestershire website. This included advice around smarter shopping, on the go plastics, what happens to the plastic you recycle and what else you can do as residents. Our football world cup campaign in the summer also had a focus around recycling plastic bottles, glass bottles and cans during the world cup specifically where we thought there may be an increase in beverage containers.</p> <p>Over the next year, the JWT will continue this focus around single use</p>

	<p>plastics. For example, the JWT will be supporting 'Plastic Free Coleford' (an initiative between Coleford Town Council and the Forest of Dean District Council). This project is very much in its early stages with actions yet to be defined but is likely to look at engaging with parents, schools and retailers in the town to reduce the use of SUPs locally. Learning and outcomes could be shared allowing for similar projects to grow across the county.</p> <p>Further communications and campaigns for 2019/20 are currently being planned, but will retain a focus on reducing SUP.</p>
<p>18. Questioner's name: Cllr Eva Ward</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>Would the Cabinet Member support the establishment of a task group to examine all options to become a 'single-use plastic-free' Council and reduce SUP use in the County?</p>	<p>Yes – very much so.</p>